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PANAMA

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FACT SHEET

RULING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

The Good Governance Program helps strengthen the regulatory framework, public policy, and institutions that work to eliminate corruption and hold corrupt officials accountable and assists civic organizations strengthen their technical and institutional capacity to press more successfully for reduced levels of corruption. USAID funding helped introduce innovative tools for effectively preventing, detecting, and prosecuting corruption in accordance with international anti-corruption standards.

In FY 2007, 12% of the goals of the National Anticorruption Strategy were achieved, which brings to 30% the goals attained over a two-year period. With USAID assistance, important steps achieved towards this objective included:

- Twenty-seven significant legislative changes and/or administrative initiatives undertaken.
- 723 persons trained (433 women, 290 men) on transparency, accountability, ethics, and forensic auditing improved public sector capacity.
- Over 600 members of local civic groups (275 women, 327 men) trained in anticorruption initiatives and support mobilized to ensure public, transparent discussions of the new Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code.

USAID assistance catalyzed significant improvements necessary to advance achievement of the goals of the National Anticorruption Strategy, including:

- Adoption of legislation to prevent and prosecute corruption. Criminal Code and Civil Service Act, as enacted, are instrumental in Panama's transition to a more transparent, expeditious, and equitable administration of justice and the prosecution of corruption.
- Anticorruption mechanisms and norms such as asset forfeiture and recovery mechanisms, whistleblower and witness protection, plea-bargaining, and conflict of interest, included in the Criminal Procedure Code bill.
- Design of a new organizational structure at the National Tax Directorate to achieve financial and administrative autonomy leading to better management through a merit-based civil service.
- Investigative and prosecution best practices at the Anticorruption Investigation Unit of the Attorney General's Office helped identify and prioritize high-profile corruption cases, facilitating their prosecution.
- Five major social audits, covering 31 public sector entities and containing follow-on measures, encouraged good governance through increased scrutiny of government actions.
 - Citizens' audit of the administration of criminal justice identified corruption and other factors as major obstacles faced by the judicial system.
 - Monitoring of 20 high-profile corruption cases identified institutional shortcomings and resulted in recommendations to improve anticorruption practices in government.
 - Two studies tracked GOP compliance with the basic elements of the Freedom of Information Act.
 - Survey findings on corruption perception sparked policy dialogue to fight corruption.
- Seven public-private alliances supported eight anticorruption activities to reinforce citizens' ethical values, transparency, and good governance. Contributions by local private sector partners totaled \$1.1 million, a ratio of 1:1.92 of USAID investment to private sector resources.